

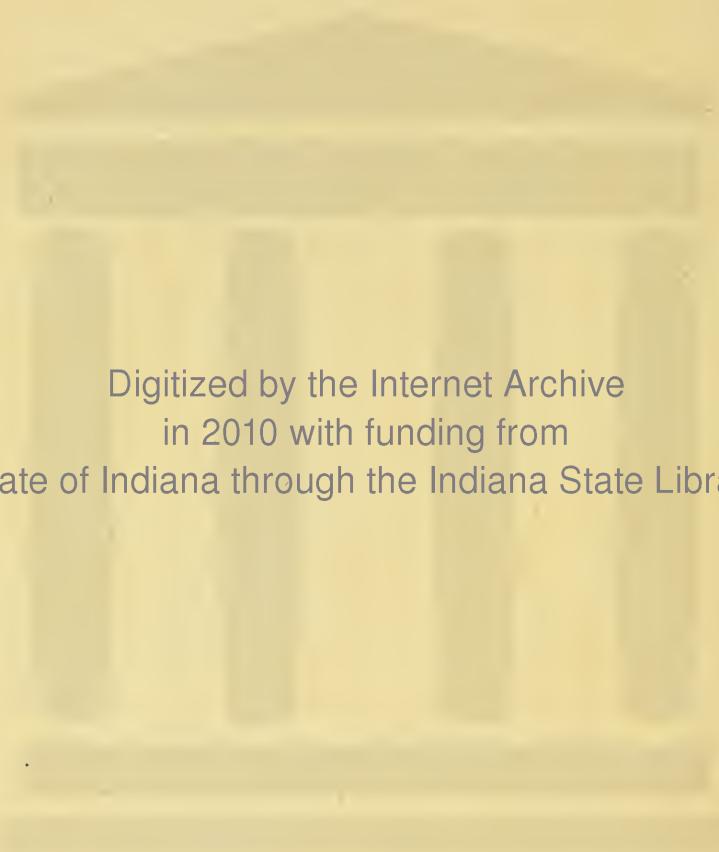
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ADDRESS OF

HON. N. P. CHIPMAN

Presiding Justice of the District Court of Appeal

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA



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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

*Address of Hon. N. P. Chipman, Presiding Justice of the District Court
of Appeal, At a Banquet given by the Cherry Tree Club
of Sacramento, California*

February 22, 1906



Mr. President and Gentlemen:—As I am informed, the Cherry Tree Club meets once each year to commemorate the birthday of the Father of his Country. Your club is composed almost entirely of young men, most of whom were born since the close of the Civil War, and few, if any, of you were old enough at that time to have any personal recollection of the events that marked the most tragic period in the history of the Republic. I am asked to portray the character of the man who was not only the central figure in that Titanic struggle, but whose memory is, and will ever be, enshrined in the hearts of all liberty-loving people throughout the habitable globe. May I not hope that you will bear with me if I shall attempt more than a brief passing tribute to the character of this remarkable man. May I not be indulged in an endeavor to quicken in your minds the meaning of that great epoch in our history, while bringing to your attention some of the conspicuous characteristics of the man about whom I am to speak, and some of the events connected with which he will always be the one prominent personality.

In devotion to his country; in breadth of statesmanship; in exalted character; in blameless private life, the name of Abraham Lincoln will grow brighter with the ages—the synonym of true greatness—the harbinger of that period to which we all look, of peace on earth, good will to man. “In his early days he struck his roots deep down into the common soil of the earth, and in his latest years his head towered and shone among the stars!”

Some one has said that the American people are peculiarly fortunate in the coincidence that they may celebrate the birthday, in the same month, of two of the most illustrious men in all the world. It was eminently appropriate, therefore, that in assembling to honor the memory of George Washington your thoughts should also turn to the

man who preserved to us the Nation so nobly established by the Fathers of the Revolution.

It is a question whether we get the true perspective of historical personages through the opinions of contemporaneous observers. In some respects we probably do not. It is in the fullness of time that the true value of great public service and distinguishing traits of personal character can be rightly and adequately estimated.

And yet there is a certain indefinable sympathy and feeling of brotherhood existing among contemporaries that arouse in them a keener appreciation of what has been accomplished by one of their number than is possible to kindle in the hearts of posterity for the deeds of their remote ancestors.

I am trying to convey this meaning: That it is not possible, for example, to portray the life and services of George Washington at this distance, so as to reach a personal, sympathetic chord such as is awakened in our hearts when contemplating the life and services of Abraham Lincoln, whose tragic martyrdom touches the tenderest feelings of our natures, and for whose services and sacrifices we experience a sense of personal indebtedness and sympathy.

The appropriateness of connecting the name of Lincoln with that of Washington is attested by the fact that we have come to associate these two persons, each in his time, as the two most distinguished leaders in the two great epochs of American history.

I had thought of comparing the lives and achievements of these two colossal characters as perhaps a satisfactory method of performing my task. But a little reflection convinced me that this would be most incongruous and inadequate.

The personal characteristics of these two men were wholly unlike; the conditions confronting them were entirely dissimilar; the responsibilities assumed by Washington, though great, were infinitely less weighty, less complex, and, in their consequences to mankind, less portentous than those cast upon the shoulders of Lincoln.

May I ask you then to give me your attention while I shall endeavor to place before you Lincoln the man and Lincoln the President as he appeared to me.

With the history of his birth, early life, and subsequent career as a lawyer, attending to the petty controversies among his neighbors, I need not speak. There was nothing in this period to mark him as distinguished above a thousand other plodding lawyers by whom he was surrounded. He had been

in the Legislature, he had been in Congress, and while we now, looking back, may see in him then some of those characteristics that distinguished him in after life, they were not so pronounced as to lead his most intimate friends to predict for him a career in any sense conspicuous.

And yet in all those years his sturdy common sense; his matchless honesty and probity of character; his sympathy with the people and his vigorous mental capacity, were gradually preparing him for his great work, and as gradually centering public confidence upon him as the type of American leadership in the great anti-slavery struggle then developing.

Prior to his famous debate with Stephen A. Douglas, Mr. Lincoln's reputation was scarcely more than local, but that intellectual combat focalized the Nation's thought upon him and his nomination at Chicago was both logical as well as a natural expression of his party's wisdom and foresight. I was a spectator of that splendid and inspiring scene, when it seemed as if the pent-up protests and accumulated remonstrances of long years against Southern aggression and arrogance broke forth in unrestrained and unrestrainable manifestations, and rang out in one great burst of defiance—at once a clarion note prophetic of war, and the death knell of human slavery in America. It was a scene of wild rejoicing, and unfaltering consecration to an exalted purpose. The Annunciation of the Nation's Savior was proclaimed at that hour. The Solid South repudiated the Messiah, but the Loyal North made him President and crowned him with immortality.

It is now accepted history that the election of Mr. Lincoln was made the pretext of withdrawal from the Union by the Southern States, and rebellion in arms followed in hot haste. The interval between his election and inauguration was an interval of war-like preparations by the South; of larceny of the munitions of war, and rape of the fortresses of the Union.

All the arts of the wicked one were used to instil into the minds of the officers of the army who owed their titles and distinction to a Nation's generosity, the fatal poison of love of the State before love of the Nation; and that other and most destructive fallacy—the right of a State to withdraw from the Union. So powerful were these seductive influences that even that Prince of Chivalric Honor—that man of spotless integrity and high promise, Robert E. Lee, stripped from his shoulders the insignia of office in the Union army and drew his sword against his country.

Washington City swarmed with traitors; the halls of Congress rang out with treasonable utterances; the very fountain of loyalty was polluted.

Into this fetid atmosphere, amid these depressing surroundings; into this awful shadow of rebellion hanging over the Nation's Capital, the modest son of the Republic came upon a mission that was to cost him his life; that was to drench our land in fratricidal blood; but that was to witness a Nation new born.

When he arrived in Washington Mr. Lincoln was as far from appreciating the strength and value of his personality as were those around him of realizing fully the momentous importance of the events he was to control or of understanding how great was the man who was to lead us to victory.

The oath of office was administered in front of the Capitol by Chief Justice Taney, who had in effect declared it to be the judgment of the Supreme Court of the United States that negro slaves had no rights which a white man was bound to respect. And singularly enough the man who was soon to strike the shackles from these same bondsmen, in his Inaugural Address declared it to be the Republican doctrine, entrenched in the Constitution, that a slave who escapes from a slave State into a free State is not thereby made free, but becomes so only when voluntarily taken into free territory. Upon the question of the right of a State to secede his argument was clear, luminous and unanswerable. He declared that "no State could lawfully get out of the Union," as he expressed it, and that he would do all in his power to enforce the laws. He added: "I trust this will not be regarded as a menace, but only as the declared purpose of the Union that it will constitutionally defend and maintain itself. In doing this there need be no bloodshed or violence, and there shall be none unless it is forced upon the national authority." We now know that at that moment plans were being perfected by rebel conspirators to seize the forts, arsenals and other Government property. Lincoln's plea for peace, designed to placate the South, had little effect upon her people, but it turned upon the rebel leaders the responsibility of beginning hostilities. Lincoln's voice was sharp and penetrating, with a plaintive intonation, and his almost pathetic plea must have deeply moved the throng who hung upon his matchless address. The concluding paragraph will ever stand as one of the most remarkable perorations ever uttered by man. He said: "I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passions may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic cords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriot grave to every living heart and hearth-stone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the

Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

Alas! As an appeal with a promise of immediate fulfillment it fell on many unresponsive ears. As prophecy it now reads to us as a vision of light from on high, though its realization came after long years and long after the close of the most sanguinary strife in modern history.

I cannot hope that your indulgence will permit me to even sketch all the strenuous and crowded years through which he passed and the relation he bore to the momentous events that filled the pages of our Civil War. I shall only here and there notice them and then only to convey some idea of the man Lincoln, through some of the more striking features of his Administration. With characteristic magnanimity and against the advice of many friends he called to his Cabinet four men—Seward, Chase, Bates and Cameron—who had been candidates for the Presidency when Lincoln was chosen. He refused to believe at such a time that men worthy to serve as his advisers would be unfaithful to their trust and seek self-aggrandizement. He said to his friends: "Let us forget ourselves and join hands, like brothers, to save the Republic. If we succeed there will be glory enough for all."

Lincoln was inaugurated March 4, 1861, and on March 9th the Rebel Congress, having previously assembled at Montgomery, Alabama, passed a Bill for the organization of an army. Commissioners were sent to Washington to negotiate a treaty with the Government. The President would not see them, but sent them a copy of his Inaugural Address. They remained until in April, Mr. Lincoln meanwhile giving no sign, and were then informed by Mr. Seward that they could have no recognition from the Government of the United States. Mr. Lincoln was determined that the overt act for which everybody was waiting, and about which everybody was talking, should come from the Rebels. It came when the resolve was taken to provision Major Anderson's gallant company at Fort Sumter. General Beauregard opened fire on April 12th, and war was declared by the South, and on April 15th the President called for 75,000 troops. The North was aflame. Party ties for the time disappeared—but one sentiment prevailed—that for the preservation of the Union. Congress was called to assemble at the Capital on July 4, 1861. As showing the spirit of the North, Ohio, whose quota was 13,000, within one week after the call was issued, offered the services of 70,000 patriots to Governor Denison; and to the call generally more than 500,000 had sprung to arms.

Jefferson Davis in his message to the Confederate Congress had by an artful and insidious argument urged the right of secession for which the South were bound to fight if necessary. In his message to the American Congress, which assembled July 4th, Mr. Lincoln, after recounting the events of the past two months showing that the Rebels had forced the issue of war or dissolution of the Union, pointed out with great clearness and force the impending consequences of this issue. He said: "It presents to the whole family of man the question whether a Constitutional Republic or Democracy—a Government of the people by the same people—can or cannot maintain its territorial integrity against domestic foes. It presents the question whether discontented individuals, too few in numbers to control administration according to organic law in any case, can always, upon the pretenses made in this case, or any other pretenses, or arbitrarily, without any pretense, break up their Government, and thus practically put an end to free Government upon the earth. It forces us to ask, 'Is there in all Republics this inherent and fatal weakness? Must a Government, of necessity, be too strong for the liberties of its own people, or too weak to maintain its own existence?'"

There was no mistaking now the stupendous issue. It meant not only the possibility of free government in America but whether it ever could exist anywhere upon the earth. It meant that the heresy of the right to secede, which Mr. Calhoun and his school had long taught, should once and for all time be fought out at the cannon's mouth. Behind it of course stood the spectre of human slavery, but the great moving cause was the asserted right of a State to withdraw from the Union. As this was the crucial issue, and should not be permitted to be clouded by pretense of other grounds for rebellion, I must be permitted to quote another brief paragraph from Mr. Lincoln's unanswerable argument. "The sophism," he said, "is that any State of the Union may consistently with the National Constitution, and therefore lawfully and peacefully, withdraw from the Union without consent of the Union or any other State. The little disguise, that the supposed right is to be exercised only for just cause, themselves to be the judges of its justice, is too thin to merit notice. With rebellion thus sugar-coated they have been drugging the public mind of their section for more than thirty years, and until at length they have brought many good men to a willingness to take up arms against the Government the day after some assemblage of men has enacted the farcical pretense of taking their State out of the Union, who would have, could have, been brought to no such thing the day before."

In the following November occurred the affair of the British packet-ship Trent. Mason and Slidell, two rebel envoys, took passage, one for England and the other for France, on the Trent, their purpose being to induce those great Powers to recognize the Confederacy as a Nation. Captain Wilkes of the man-of-war San Jacinto, overhauled the Trent, brought her to by a shot across her bow, and took off the two envoys and carried them to Boston, where they were lodged in Fort Warren.

This event created pronounced approving enthusiasm throughout the North; it was looked upon as a defiant reply to the attitude of the English and the French Governments towards our Government. The demand of the British Government that the envoys should be surrendered because they had been taken from under the British flag and against the protests of the Commander of the Trent, only inflamed the popular indignation. Confronted with the danger of war with England at this critical moment, that recognition of the Confederacy might follow, resulting possibly in the permanent division of the States and dissolution of the Union, the people, nevertheless, stood firm and declared that the envoys should never be given up. Congress passed a vote of thanks to Captain Wilkes; the Secretaries of War and Navy approved his act. Secretary Seward at first also opposed any concessions to the British Government. And now shone out one of Mr. Lincoln's strong traits of character. From the first he doubted the lawfulness of the seizure, and the more he reflected the stronger became his conviction that these emissaries must be given up. Amid the popular clamor for their retention he stood thoughtful, anxious, but with calm determination to act with due regard for international law and for the highest interests of our country. A weak man would have drifted with the strong current of opinion though it might lead to war with England. But Mr. Lincoln was not a weak man. His reply to his Cabinet and to the people was: "Once we fought Great Britain for doing just what Captain Wilkes has done. If Great Britain protests against this act and demands their release, we must adhere to our principles of 1812. We must give up these prisoners. Besides, one war at a time." It is difficult at this distance from the war period to realize what courage and steadfastness were required to stem the popular tide at this important juncture. Some idea of the strain put upon Mr. Lincoln's character may come to you when I repeat the declaration of Senator John P. Hale of New Hampshire. "If," said he, "this Administration will not listen to the voice of the people, they will find themselves engulfed in a fire that will consume them like stubble; they will be helpless before a power

that will hurl them from their places.' The sober judgment of time has fully vindicated the wisdom of Lincoln's action at this perilous crisis.

No phase of the Civil War like that of the slavery question brought out more clearly the strength of Mr. Lincoln's character or showed in stronger light the dominant thought in his mind which was the preservation of the Union.

The popular clamor was insistent and strong for the immediate and unconditional abolition of slavery. General Fremont in August, 1861, undertook to cut the Gordian knot with the backing of his sword in Missouri. He issued a proclamation of confiscation of rebel property, including the liberation of slaves. Unwilling to rebuke Fremont, Mr. Lincoln, in his kindly and conciliatory way, so characteristic of him, wrote a letter asking General Fremont to modify his order and pointing out the difficulty he was having in the border States to maintain a loyal spirit. But Fremont was obdurate and refused, believing, which was true, that the popular feeling of the North was behind him. Mr. Lincoln was, in September, 1861, compelled to modify Fremont's proclamation and make it conform to the Act of Congress and the rules of war. Later, in May, 1862, he was compelled to revoke General Hunter's proclamation of emancipation in the States of Georgia, Florida and South Carolina, and in doing so proclaimed "that neither General Hunter nor any other Commander has been authorized by the Government of the United States to make proclamations declaring slaves of any State free." And to settle the matter he declared that he "reserved to himself the right to determine whether it should become a necessity indispensable to the maintenance of the Government to exercise the supposed power of proclaiming emancipation of the slaves."

Mr. Lincoln's anxiety and embarrassment were greatly increased by the attitude of General McClellan on this subject, which brought out the suggestion from the impatient people that McClellan was more anxious about the rights of the slave-holders than for the prosecution of the war. Mr. Lincoln was brutally criticised by political enemies in the North for going too fast in the direction of the destruction of slavery, and on the other hand by his ardent and indiscreet friends for his slowness in the same direction.

In the summer of 1862 Mr. Greeley published an open letter to the President in the New York Tribune which gave expression to the prevalent feeling at the North for immediate emancipation. Mr. Lincoln seized upon the opportunity to reply through the same medium. This letter is a fine example

of Mr. Lincoln's lucidity of expression as it also is of the frankness and simplicity of his character. I hope you will bear with me while I read a paragraph or two from this remarkable document.

"As to the policy 'I seem to be pursuing,' as you say, I have not meant to leave anyone in doubt. I would save the Union. I would save it in the shortest way under the Constitution. * * * If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them.

"If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object is to save the Union, and not either to save or destroy slavery.

"If I could save the Union without freeing any slaves, I would do it; if I could save it by freeing all of the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.

"What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save this Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. * * * I have here stated my purpose according to my views of official duty, and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free."

General Lee had achieved some notable successes and flushed with victory, crossed the Potomac into Maryland. Lincoln was profoundly stirred. No border State had as yet been invaded and Maryland was loyal. He had been contemplating Emancipation early in 1862, but hesitated to proclaim it. This last movement of the Rebel army settled the matter, and he resolved if Lee was driven back the Proclamation should issue. Lee's army was driven back into Virginia. South Mountain and Antietam were fought on the 14th and 17th of September, 1862. The Rebels were routed, broken in pieces, and Maryland and Pennsylvania were saved. On the 22nd of September Mr. Lincoln issued his proclamation, which, at the period of probation, January 1, 1863, was to strike the shackles from millions of slaves, and which ultimately left not a single bondsman on American soil. Henceforward the war assumed a new aspect. It had thus far been waged to save the Union with or without slavery. Now it was a war for the re-establishment of the Union—the Union without slavery.

In the West, Belmont, Fort Donalson, Shiloh, and Pea Ridge brought some ray of hope to the heart of the President,

but he was being sorely tried by the vacillation, timidity and open insubordination of McClellan, and by the failures of the Generals who succeeded to the command of the splendid Army of the Potomac. There are no more pathetic pages in American history than those recounting the struggles of the President to maintain relations of mutual amity and confidence between himself and McClellan. If I could trespass upon your patience by reading from Mr. Lincoln's correspondence at this period, in his effort to induce McClellan to press the advantage he had, you would see shining out the strong points in Lincoln's character, and how with tearful reluctance he was finally forced to retire McClellan from further military duty. These were gloomy, depressing days for Lincoln, but amid all discouragements he never once faltered in his faith that ultimate victory would crown our arms.

The year 1863 brought great anxiety to Lincoln and at times he almost lost hope. Through many portions of the North secret societies were forming in aid of the rebellious South. General Burnside had issued his famous order giving notice that all persons within his lines, including the State of Ohio, who should be guilty of acts designed to assist the enemy, would be arrested as traitors and spies, tried, and, if convicted, be put to death.

Vallandingham, a prominent politician of that State, immediately denounced General Burnside's order and called upon the people to resist. He was arrested, tried, convicted, by Military Commission, and sentenced to imprisonment in Fort Warren. The President changed the penalty to expulsion through the Union lines into the Rebel States. The Democrats demanded his return and nominated him as their candidate for Governor. To the deputation that visited Washington, Mr. Lincoln said: "Your own attitude encourages desertion, resistance to the draft, and the like, because it teaches those who incline to desert and to escape the draft, to believe it is your purpose to protect them," and he added: "Must I shoot a simple-minded soldier boy who deserts while I must not touch a hair of the wily agitator who induces him to desert? I think that, in such a case, to silence the agitator and save the boy is not only Constitutional, but withal a great mercy." Vallandingham was defeated at the polls by a Republican majority of over 100,000.

Depressing as were the early days of 1863 with defeat after defeat to our arms in the East, the clouds rolled by in July, when on our Natal day the glorious Fourth was made memorable and more glorious by the victories of Grant at Vicksburg and Meade at Gettysburg.

Among the many trying experiences of the President none were more vexatious than the jealousies and bickerings among the officers of the army—especially the Army of the Potomac. Even while Grant was successful in pushing his operations on the Mississippi there were constant efforts to have him superceded. The reply of Lincoln in this particular case is one of the many evidences of his characteristic manner of answering malcontents.

The trial and conviction of Fitz John Porter, one of General McClellan's favorites, for his failure to support General Pope, who was being driven towards Washington by Jackson, Longstreet and Lee, was one of the tragic episodes illustrating the gangrene of jealousy and insubordination that was disintegrating one of the finest armies ever assembled.

When the President placed General Hooker in command he wrote this gallant officer a most remarkable letter. I cannot read it all to you, but I must read a paragraph. He said: "I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticising their commander and withholding confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it. And now, beware of rashness." Knowing fighting Joe Hooker as he did, he repeated: "Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance, go forward and give us victories." The answer Hooker gave at last was Chancellorsville, with its appalling story of disaster.

On May 6th a dispatch came from General Hooker's Chief of Staff stating that the army had safely recrossed the Rappahannock. The message was read aloud to Lincoln, who with his eyes streaming with tears, cried out: "My God! My God! what will the country say? What will the country say?" Within an hour and in a pouring rain he and General Halleck were on their way to the army by Acquia Creek.

Is it strange that he was uplifted by the great victories of the succeeding July, or that he later found cause for discouragement at the continued failures of that year to achieve decisive results in the East and at the increasing spirit of discontent among the peace-at-any-price patriots and the non-combatants of the loyal North?

On July 18, 1864, the President issued a call for 500,000 men. At that time the draft was in force and he was a candidate for re-election. He was besought by his Republican friends to postpone the order in view of the strong resistance to the draft. He was told that he was sacrificing every hope

of success at the polls by enforcing this drastic measure for more troops. His reply was: "What is the Presidency worth to me, if I have no country?" and no persuasion could drive him from his firm resolution.

The days were dark to Lincoln in the year 1864. Campaign slanders were rife as usual, and among them that Mr. Lincoln would, if defeated at the polls, devote the remainder of his term to ruin the Government. Mr. Lincoln rarely replied to such charges, but this touched a very tender and sensitive spot. In a speech to some serenaders he took the opportunity to meet these charges: "I am struggling to maintain the Government, not to overthrow it," he said. "I am struggling especially to prevent others from overthrowing it. * * * In the interval I shall do my utmost that whoever is to hold the helm for the next voyage shall start with the best possible chance to save the ship." Referring to the possible choice of some one unfriendly to continuing the war, he said: "If they should deliberately resolve to have immediate peace, even at the loss of their country and their liberty, I have not the power or the right to resist them." It was during these dark days on August 26th that he wrote: "This morning, as for some days past, it seems exceedingly probable that this Administration will not be re-elected. Then it will be my duty to so co-operate with the President-elect as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration, as he will have secured his election on such ground that he cannot possibly save it afterwards." He folded this paper so that it could not be read and requested each member of the Cabinet to sign his name on the reverse side.

In the end Mr. Lincoln's gloomy forebodings were wholly dissipated. The Republicans elected 212 Presidential Electors and the Democrats with McClellan as their champion, and a platform declaring the war to be a failure, received but 21.

Mr. Lincoln refused to receive the news as evidence of his personal triumph. He was absolutely dispassionate and impersonal in his political relationships and in his official action. This trait in his character can find but few parallels in history. An instance occurred upon the death of Chief Justice Taney, October 12, 1864. Mr. Chase's friends at once named him for the succession. Those of you who have read the history of those days will recall that Mr. Lincoln had little personal reason for favoring Mr. Chase, who was known to have intrigued to prevent his nomination and secure it to himself; who was known to have spoken contemptuously of Mr. Lincoln and who sustained a sort of condescending and patronizing attitude towards his chief. Mr. Lincoln had strong reasons

for favoring Montgomery Blair. But he put aside every other consideration and appointed Mr. Chase, believing that he was the best man for this great office.

When Congress assembled in December, 1864, the doom of the Confederacy seemed certain. Victorious Grant had been called to the leadership of all the armies of the Union, and had fought his way through the wilderness amid frightful slaughter and was beleaguring Petersburg, with the capture of Richmond almost assured in the near future. Sherman had marched gaily through the heart of the South. Thomas had broken Hood's army, which Sherman left in his rear. The notorious destroyer, the Alabama, had been sunk by the Kearsarge. The Shenandoah, the last of the Rebel privateers, sailed into Liverpool, and was turned over by the British to Federal officials. Lieutenant Cushing had, by a matchless and daring stroke of gallantry, destroyed the Rebel ram Albermarle. Fort Fisher and Wilmington had fallen and Farragut had bottled up Mobile Bay to blockade runners. With this hopeful outlook Mr. Lincoln was nevertheless besieged by well-meaning people in the North to enter upon some sort of negotiations with the leader of the Rebellion. His message to Congress in December is a masterful reply to those who entertained a hope of settlement by a cessation of hostilities except upon the terms demanded by the leader of the Rebellion. In his message, Mr. Lincoln said: "He," (referring to Jefferson Davis, whom he never mentioned by name, I believe, in any State paper), "would accept nothing short of severance of the Union—precisely what we will not and cannot give. His declarations to this effect are explicit and oft-repeated. He does not attempt to deceive us. He affords no excuse to deceive ourselves. He cannot voluntarily reaccept the Union; we cannot voluntarily yield it. Between him and us the issue is distinct, simple and inflexible. It is an issue which can only be tried by war, and decided by victory."

Notwithstanding these strong convictions, Mr. Lincoln yielded to the persuasion of the peacemakers and consented to send Mr. Seward to meet the Confederate Commissioners, Messrs. Stephens, Campbell and Hunter, on January 31, 1865. Mr. Davis had appointed them "with a view to secure peace between the two countries," as he expressed it. Mr. Lincoln refused to act until the last two words were stricken from the instructions. Mr. Lincoln's memorandum to Mr. Seward embraced three indispensable conditions:

First—The restoration of the National authority throughout all the States. Second—No backward step on the slavery question. Third—No cessation of hostilities short of an end

of the war and the disbanding of all forces hostile to the Government. Mr. Lincoln became uneasy at being represented in so important a matter by any person, and he decided to go himself. Then followed the famous Hampton Roads Conference. Although historic, it came to nothing, as he expected. But it brought out many interesting incidents. One of these illustrates Mr. Lincoln's ready wit. Mr. Lincoln took the position that he could not enter into any agreement with "parties in arms against the Government." Mr. Hunter, one of the Commissioners, to the contrary cited precedents "of this character between Charles I of England and the people in arms against him." Mr. Lincoln replied: "I do not profess to be posted in history. On all such matters I will turn you over to Seward. All I distinctly recollect about the case of Charles I is, **that he lost his head.**"

The fourth of March was approaching when for the second time he was to address the people who had freely chosen him as their leader. The black pall of war that had hovered over the country for four years was rapidly passing away. The fury of the Rebellion was fast subsiding into hopeless regrets and heartburnings.

Mr. Lincoln's inaugural address was a short but most graphic statement of the then situation of our country as compared with its condition in 1861, at his first inaugural. One of Mr. Lincoln's biographers has truthfully said that this speech has taken its place among the most famous of all written or spoken compositions in the English language. In parts it has been compared with the lofty portions of the Old Testament. In it we find exhibited the deep religious spirit that pervaded the soul of Lincoln. I quote the closing passage: "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled up by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid by another drawn by the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still must it be said, 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'" Then follows the oft-quoted passage as exhibiting the great heart of Lincoln: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the Nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all Nations."

The Proclamation of Freedom embraced only slaves held in States in rebellion; it did not determine universal freedom of the slaves throughout the Union. This was accomplished by the thirteenth amendment. When proposed in 1864, the House of Representatives refused to pass the joint resolution by two-thirds majority. Mr. Lincoln insisted that the party platform on which he was to stand should declare in no uncertain terms for emancipation, and so it did. On reassembling in December, the House reconsidered the matter, and, with the aid of Democratic votes, to the credit of that party be it said, the resolution was passed. One after another of the States not then in rebellion adopted the amendment, but Mr. Lincoln died before enough States had acted to pass the amendment. At the conclusion of the vote in the House of Representatives, there arose an irrepressible outburst of triumphant applause. Speaker Colfax vainly struggled to resume the regular order of business, but the house adjourned "in honor of this immortal and sublime event."

It was decreed that from the day of the second inauguration Mr. Lincoln was to be given less than five weeks to live. But he was to have the satisfaction of witnessing the crowning glory of his Administration—the overthrow of rebellion, the re-establishment of the Union, and the extirpation of slavery forever from our fair land. His last days were filled with anxious thoughts and with a full comprehension that the termination of the war would bring with it new and profoundly complex and difficult problems of government. He was now about to enter upon the great work he foresaw in closing his second inaugural address—"To finish the work we are in, to bind up the Nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphans, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all Nations."

He was now about to realize the prophecy of his first inaugural address when he said. "The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our natures."

God be praised! Although Mr. Lincoln did not live to see it, the day has come when the better angels of the natures of all the American people have led them to swell the chorus of the Union.

Mr. Lincoln, throughout all the rebellion, seemed to bear upon his own shoulders and in his own heart, all the woes of his people. I was on duty in the War Department from the

winter of 1862-3, and passed and repassed the Executive Mansion almost daily to the close of the war. It was my privilege to perform some services directly under his eye and by his personal instruction. I saw him many, many times after victories and after defeats: when important legislation was passing the crucible of opposition in Congress; when political cabals were forming to defeat his re-election; when passionate patriots were urging him to push the war with greater vigor; when conservative half-hearted Republicans were begging him to desist; when well meaning but erratic friends were urging him to compromise on any terms; when a great opposition party in the North were resolving in National Convention that the war was a failure; when riots and revolts threatened to stop further enlistments; when the Knights of the Golden Circle and other secret treasonable organizations were seeking to undermine loyal sentiment and intimidate loyal men in loyal States; when a policy of reprisals was inaugurated in Rebel prisons to starve Union soldiers to death; when the long list of the dead and the dying and the wounded Union soldiers was laid before him from a hundred battlefields,—and, yet, amid it all, he stood the one determined, hopeful, courageous figure; never doubting, never flinching, never hesitating, but suffering as no man can know how it is to suffer.

I stood by his side at Gettysburg when he delivered that marvelously beautiful tribute to the noble dead who lay at his feet. I saw him when with clear and almost angelic voice he turned his care-furrowed face toward the sky and uttered those immortal lines, speaking as one inspired, and as though in the very presence of the throne of God!

Let me repeat to you the golden words as they fell from the lips of Lincoln on that solemn occasion:

“Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new Nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great Civil War, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that Nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedi-

cated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us; that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this Nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Here, everywhere, and always, he seemed to me to be personifying the intense and awful strain of one standing for a Nation and vicariously bearing its burdens.

I saw him, too, when the Rebel hosts had laid down their arms; when the glad tidings of peace were upon every tongue; and all the land was filled with rejoicings; but even yet peace had not come to him.

The great problems of reconstruction, the labor of building up a stricken and devastated country, of bringing two great warring regions into harmonious relations of peace and unity; of restoring the Union in the hearts of all the people; all these questions, this labor, were before him. For the moment he was overjoyed, for the moment his mind and soul relaxed, but only for the moment.

Unlike him in almost every other respect, in this one characteristic of unbending and unceasing devotion to the restoration of the Union, absorbed and possessed by the awful reality of the war and its consequences, I never knew but two men like him; one was his faithful and greatest Lieutenant, Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War; and the other was Joseph Holt, Judge Advocate-General of the Army.

It was a dreadful hour when the assassin struck down this hero of heroes. The blow was given in the name of the rebellion, but it was a blow that even rebellion disowned and repudiated, for it was a blow portentous of evil to the South.

I am endeavoring, my young friends, to bring before you something like an adequate picture of the man Lincoln as I saw him and knew him. I cannot go further into incidents in his life, so full of dramatic interest; with these indeed you are familiar, for our histories are filled with them.

The conspicuous and dominant traits of his character and mind as I would analyze them, were: Sagacity, Firmness, Modesty, Patience, Magnanimity, Courage, Charity and Loyalty.

Lincoln was a sagacious man; his wisdom was broad, penetrating, almost infallibly discriminating. It embraced with

it also what we call in animals instinct, in men intuition, inspiration. He made mistakes in men, though seldom, but rarely in policies. His messages, correspondence, State papers and speeches, show a wonderful mental acuteness and discernment.

Firm as the granite hills where once his judgment was fully satisfied and his sense of duty fully awakened, no man was ever more considerate of the opinions of others or more eager to obtain light from the counsels of those in whom he had confidence.

His patience and forbearance under great trial were so pronounced and so conspicuous that he was often the victim of persecution and even villification by those who mistook these sublime traits for pusillanimity. A striking illustration is found in his generous treatment of McClellan in the face of gross disrespect shown by him of the President; and, in his almost paternal kindness towards Horace Greeley, under circumstances that would have warranted the severest measures towards the one and the absolute withdrawal of all confidence from the other.

He was as modest as he was magnanimous—indeed, these two qualities lie in close companionship. An arrogant and vain man cannot well be magnanimous. The natural kindness and gentleness of Lincoln's heart brought him into close sympathy with the people; kept him from building up a wall between him and them, and fostered and developed these two qualities of modesty and magnanimity into prominent characteristics.

Of his courage that high moral development that distinguishes a man from a lion—he gave the highest evidence. He showed it in his emancipation of Southern slaves and putting hostile arms in their hands and making them soldiers of the Union; he showed it in sustaining officers against public clamor for their removal; and in removing officers whom the public demanded should be retained; he showed it in daring to differ with Congress in the reconstruction of Louisiana and Arkansas, when sturdy Ben Wade and hot-headed Henry Winter Davis, both in Congress, appealed to the country in a manifesto that denounced the President as guilty of dictatorial usurpation; in a hundred ways he displayed this striking characteristic of high moral courage.

His charity was as broad as the human race. It was the charity of the Apostle Paul—"that envieth not; that vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; thinketh no evil; beareth all things; believeth all things; endureth all things." This striking feature of his character is seen in the concluding paragraph

of his second inaugural address, March 4, 1865, which I have read to you, where he speaks "with malice towards none, with charity for all."

But the crowning glory of this man's character, viewing him only in his relation to the great work before him, was his deep, intense and all-pervading sentiment of loyalty to the Union. The one great purpose that possessed his soul was the desire to preserve the Union. This was manifest always and everywhere. It ran like a golden thread through all his policies, through all his messages, through all his addresses, through all his sincere but futile efforts to effect a peace by compromise. It was the one thought paramount to all others. So profound was this feeling that even as late as in August, 1862, and while he was pressed to issue his proclamation of emancipation, and only one month before he actually did promulgate it, he would, had it been necessary, have restored the Union with its Constitutional protection over slavery.

The possible success of Rebellion and the dissolution of the Union were to him the knell of Republican Government throughout the earth. Rather than this he would see African slavery fight its way to freedom by the sure though prolonged processes of moral evolution, and the march of progressive ideas that must in time have wrought out the problem of universal manumission.

This is Lincoln as he was manifested to me, and as I still see him—a grand and noble man. Since the coming of the Savior of mankind the human race has been blessed by no other so great a benefactor.

There can be no doubt, there never will arise a doubt in the ages to come, that ABRAHAM LINCOLN was the most heroic, the most exalted character in American history.

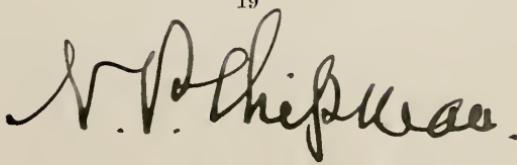
Note—Having received so many calls for a copy of this address I have had a limited number reprinted.

San Francisco, Cal.

972 Bush St.

N. P. C.

August 7, 1922.



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